

Meningitis Awareness

February 17, 2009

The Health District expects a few cases of suspected meningitis each year, typically in winter months. The public should be aware of signs and symptoms of meningitis and promptly seek medical attention if any symptoms are present. As of February 17, the Health District has received one probable report of bacterial meningitis and is working to identify intimate and close contacts to prevent risk of spread. Some germs that cause meningitis warrant preventive antibiotic for intimate contacts if within 2 weeks of exposure and some do not require such action. The bacteria are spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (i.e., coughing, kissing, sharing utensils or drinking after an infected person). Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as things like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. Therefore, an individual being in the same classroom or area with an infected person is **not** considered direct exposure and are not at increased risk and not recommended to receive antibiotics. A meningitis vaccine is available to high risk group and offers some protection for some causes of bacterial meningitis. For further information: [Spanish](#) or [English](#).

Kurt Koopmann
Public Information Officer
Galveston County Health District
(409) 938-2211 or (409) 392-0007
kkoopman@gchd.org